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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000624

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PINS, MARR, MASS, MCAP, MAP, CG

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF ARTICLES RESULTING FROM
JUNE 25 PRESS ROUNDTABLE ON SBGV

REF: KINSHASA 613

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Media reaction to June 25 PD section's monthly press roundtable (reftel) on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) was widespread and largely positive. Highlights follow. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Mission's public diplomacy section organizes a monthly Press Roundtable at the ambassador's residence. The subject for June 25 - SGBV - was chosen due to the alarming dimensions of the problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Participating in the roundtable were charge d'affaires, AID mission director, director of office of security cooperation (OSC), PAO, poloff responsible for human rights issues, and AID program officer. Of thirteen journalists who attended, PAS recorded three newspaper articles, four television broadcasts, two online articles, and one radio broadcast resulting from the event.

¶3. (SBU) The pro-government newspaper "L'Observateur" ran a more than half-page, above-the-fold article on page 4. The headline read "The U.S. strengthens fight against sexual violence in the DRC." The article quoted charge as saying in a lead summary: "The United States is very concerned with the elevated levels of violence against women and children in the DRC." The article quoted charge's opening remarks at length, as well as responses by USAID mission chief, OSC chief, and a USAID program officer, outlining the various programs supported by USG to fight SGBV in the DRC.

¶4. (SBU) The pro-opposition newspaper "Le Phare" ran a three-quarter-page story on page 11 below the fold. The headline read "Fight Against Sexual Violence: Obama Plan for the DRC." The article, which was illustrated by a large photo of President Obama, described the various USG programs fighting SGBV in the DRC and paraphrased the remarks of embassy representatives.

¶5. (SBU) Note: The Obama administration's commitment to the fight against SGBV was emphasized by charge in his opening remarks. End note.

¶6. (SBU) In a one-third page below the fold article on page 4, the pro-government newspaper "L'Avenir" emphasized the total amount of USG spending to fight SGBV in the DRC. Beneath a headline reading "Struggle Against Sexual Violence in the DRC: American Government Spends \$10 million," the article carried the following lead: "Sexual violence against women and young girls is occurring throughout the DRC. The fundamental causes are inequalities between the sexes and the dehumanization of women."

¶7. (SBU) Note: The lead in article in "L'Avenir" is an almost verbatim paraphrase of charge's opening remarks, and went on to cite a USAID fact-sheet handed out at the press event. End note.

¶8. (SBU) The independent newspaper "Le Potential" ran a story with the headline "U.S. Gets Involved in Fight Against Sexual Violence in the DRC" on its website at following address:
http://www.lepotentiel.com/afficher_article.php?id_article=82921&id_edition=4715

¶9. (SBU) Television coverage was also extensive and positive. RTGA television broadcast 1:30 minute segment which described the problem and the USG programs in response, specifically medical aid to survivors of SGBV, legal and military reform, and community outreach. RAGA ran a 2:00 minute segment which described how the USG supported GDRC in the fight against SGBV, focusing on health care to survivors as well as legal and military reform. RAGA also ran a separate interview with USAID mission chief, which it conducted shortly after the event. Antenne A television focused on humanitarian assistance to SGBV survivors and legal and military reforms. The program aired the charge d'affaires, in response to a question, saying: "The USG is helping to reform the legal system in the DRC, but we can only do so much. The rest must come from the DRC itself." Antenne A also ran an excerpt of USAID program officer describing health care activities in eastern DRC. Canal Kin focused on health care for SGBV survivors and legal and military reforms. MONUC's Radio Okapi reported on the Office of Security Cooperation's request for a MedCap program to strengthen medical capacity to treat victims of SGBV, and also described other programs. Online journal "Congoforum" published an article on its website at this address:
<http://www.congoforum.be/fr/nieuwsdetail.asp?subi>

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tem=2&newsid=158623&Actualiteit=selected. The article cites the \$10 million figure from the press handout.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: As previously mentioned (see reftel) the Congolese media is intensely interested in SGBV in the DRC, is appreciative of USG efforts to fight this scourge, and is eager to work with Embassy Kinshasa to use a media platform to educate and increase awareness with the public. Future USG activities to fight SGBV should take advantage of the local media's interest in this most serious problem. End comment.

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